United Nations S/2006/757

Security Council

Distr.: General
21 September 2006

Original: English

Letter dated 20 September 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am writing to you with regard to the Security Council meeting of September 2006, on the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in maintaining international peace and security", to kindly request that the attached statement that Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania, was unable to deliver in person during the meeting be issued as a document of the Security Council (see annex).

(*Signed*) Mihnea **Motoc**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

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Annex to the letter dated 20 September 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement by Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania

It is an utmost pleasure for me to speak before you on this day, almost one year since I presided over the Security Council meeting on the same issue. Indeed, it is fulfilling to see that our efforts to promote cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations have not been left without an echo. In this regard, I feel compelled to extend my deepest appreciation to you, Madame President, as your country's commitment to the subject at hand could not have come at a better time. Romania and Greece are at the far ends of a complex region — the Balkan Peninsula — which, despite its share of challenges, has recently displayed exemplary regional cooperation and efficient interaction of regional and global levels.

I would also like to salute the presence early on of the United Nations Secretary-General and commend his excellent report on the regional-global security partnership. The report was submitted in response to Security Council resolution 1631 (2005), which, I am proud to say, was initiated and successfully promoted by my country. Today, as we come to grasp how clearly the Secretary-General has mapped the challenges and opportunities we face in strengthening the regional-global security partnership, I strongly believe in the mission of this process.

The members of the Security Council now possess new and better instruments to build on the momentum that has been generated in promoting cooperation with regional organizations in the service of peace and security. Apart from the recommendations included in the Secretary-General's Report, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission — a forum where regional and subregional organizations are expected to play a significant role — represents a key development.

Since Romania aligned itself with the statement that was delivered by the distinguished Foreign Minister of Finland on behalf of the European Union, I will reserve my remarks only to highlight three points which, in my view, need to be emphasized at this stage. They all figure prominently within the challenges identified by the Secretary-General's Report.

The first concerns the clarification of identities and roles of actors involved in the security cooperation of United Nations-regional entities. The world is still far from a uniformly structured system of organizations, clearly identified by their geographical or political vocation. The matter of relevance of each chapter of the Charter of the United Nations under which these organizations could contribute to maintaining peace and security is — we believe — less important than ensuring the best possible contribution from them.

As we are all aware, the global pool of resources is presently quite stretched out, hence maximizing and integrating all efforts is increasingly an imperative. Clarifying the mechanism for strengthening the global-regional partnership means, in our view, enhanced two-way communication and early warning, swifter decision-making processes and more effective marshalling of resources in times of crisis or conflict.

We are encouraged that the Security Council and the United Nations Secretariat have already taken steps to expand consultations and cooperation with regional and subregional organizations. Further measures are needed and we soon hope to see the day when regional actors will be frequent guests at Council's meetings discussing regionally relevant agenda items.

The second point which I would like to touch upon regards the issue of capacity-building. There is consensus on the potential of regional and subregional organizations in maintaining peace and security. We must, however, admit that in many cases there are constraints due to lack of funds and other resources, or organizational and operational capacity. The United Nations and the Security Council must encourage regional organizations to assume ownership as much as possible but should also seek to actively assist the capacity-building of such partner organizations.

Furthermore, regional entities have a great deal of expertise to share with one another. From electoral supervision to security sector reform, from economic development in countries emerging from conflict to regional law enforcement, from border control to the establishment of the rule of law, the lessons learned and best practices could be made available more systematically from one region to another. This is a process which could and should be facilitated by the United Nations, eventually through a dedicated structure within the Secretariat or an ad hoc working group including regional organizations and interested Member States.

Thirdly, we believe that one of the greatest challenges to the security environment — and the United Nations, in particular — is conflict prevention. The potential of this eminently peaceful tool is tremendous, yet it still has to be systematically pursued.

In this regard, Romania welcomes the recent report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict. Moreover, we fully agree with the Secretary-General that the Security Council should consider making conflict prevention a priority area in developing its future interaction with regional organizations.

Regional organizations have a key role to play in preventing conflicts within their areas, for it is often the case that preventive action by regional arrangements is the timeliest and most appropriate response to imminent conflicts or relapses into conflict.

One example that I recall from the Western Balkans is the successful mediation in recent times of the "Ohrid Agreement". Three organizations with a regional focus — namely, the European Union, NATO and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe — have played a catalytic role in this effort. Swift and coordinated action from these organizations, along with individual nations such as the United States, averted another trauma in the region, possibly saved hundreds of millions of Euros of peacekeeping operations and, most importantly, put a country on a solid path to democracy, and European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

Unfortunately, diplomatic action in the case of protracted conflicts in the Black Sea — Caucasus area — has yet to bear the same kind of fruitful result. I am referring to more than 15 years of stagnation, and consequent frustration, related to pending situations in the Republic of Moldova (region of Transnistria), Georgia (regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia) and Azerbaijan (region of Nagorny-Karabakh).

It seems that "freezing" those conflicts for a long period of time, instead of putting earlier, more collaborative efforts into solving them, was not the best approach, for the situations there have slowly but steadily deteriorated, and the threats to international peace and security remain very much alive. Thus, we can only hope that fresh new inputs from regional organizations and actors — Romania included — will alleviate the pain and sorrow of vast populations in this area, whose legitimate expectations and dreams of a better, peaceful life, have been kept arrested by the above-mentioned conflicts.

From a historical perspective, we have to give due credit, time and again, to the tremendous foresight of the Charter's founding fathers, who envisioned a global-regional cooperative approach to peace and security, at a time when regionalism was anything but the driving force it is in today's world. Given the far-reaching implications and effects of an enhanced regional-global security partnership, it is our genuine hope that the current theme will be taken up by another distinguished member of the Council next year, so as to fulfil the intention expressed in resolution 1631 (2005), that is, to hold regular meetings with Heads of regional and subregional organizations in order to strengthen the interaction and cooperation with these organizations.